



Statistical News Release: Immigration Statistics

26 May 2016

Immigration Statistics, January to March 2016

Home Office's *Immigration Statistics January to March 2016* release, published today, provides the latest figures on those subject to immigration control. All data below relate to the year ending March 2016 and all comparisons are with the year ending March 2015, unless indicated otherwise.

Estimates of the numbers of non-EU nationals migrating long-term to the UK, by reason for migration, are published by the Office for National Statistics, and available on their [International migration](#) website.

Key points from the latest release

Work

There were 91,833 **Tier 2 skilled work visas granted** in the year ending March 2016, similar to the previous year (93,061), and 43,591 Tier 5 Youth mobility and temporary visas granted, down 6% (-2,748). There were also fewer Tier 1 unsponsored work visas granted (-4,209; -47%). This was largely due to fewer grants in the Tier 1 Investor category, down 78% (-2,106), reflecting changes introduced to the category in November 2014 and fewer grants to dependants in routes now closed to new applicants (Tier 1 General -1,317; Tier 1 Post Study -95). Of the 175,176 decisions on work visas, 6% (10,682) were refused.

In the year ending December 2015, the ONS estimate there were 72,000 **non-EU long-term immigrants for work**, an increase of 7% (+5,000) compared with the previous 12 months. However, this increase was not statistically significant. Over the same period, long-term (1 year or more) **work-related visas granted** to main applicants also rose, by 22% to 81,735 in the year ending December 2015 reflecting an increase in visas in the 'short-term ICT' category that were for exactly 365 or 366 days. The level and trend from the two series are similar over the longer term. There are nonetheless a number of reasons why the long-term immigration estimates and visas data may show different trends in the shorter term, including sampling variation and coverage; further details are given in the Work topic.

Study

In the year ending March 2016 there were 206,162 **Study-related visas granted**, excluding the unsponsored short-term student category (formerly known as 'student visitors'), a reduction of 5% (-10,210). Over the same period, the number of university-**sponsored study visa applications** (main applicants) fell slightly (-1% to 164,124). However, there was a 7% increase for **Russell Group** universities to 75,403. There were also falls for the **Further Education** (-15% to 15,507), **English Language schools** (-20% to 2,669) and Independent school (-3% to 13,591) sectors. Most of the fall in the Further Education sector's sponsored visa applications since the peak in mid-2011 was accounted for by licenses which have since been revoked.

In the year ending December 2015, the ONS estimates that there were 112,000 **non-EU long-term immigrants coming to study**, a 16% (-22,000) fall, which is statistically significant. Over the same period, the number of long-term (1 year or more) study-related visas granted (main applicants) was 4% lower at 137,506. Although the trends in the long-term estimates and comparable visa numbers can differ they are fairly close given the definitional differences and the inherent variation in the ONS survey based estimates.

Family

There were 38,274 **family-related visas granted** in the year ending March 2016. This is an increase of 11% compared with the year ending March 2015 (34,592). There was a 15% decrease in the number of visas granted to dependants (excluding visitor visas) joining or accompanying other migrants in the UK (65,556) compared with the previous 12 months (77,577).

In the year ending December 2015 (the latest provisional data available), estimates from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) showed that 42,000 **non-EU nationals immigrated long-term to the UK to accompany or join others**, that is with the intention of staying for a year or more. This was an 8,000 decrease from 50,000 in the previous 12 months. Those arriving to accompany or join are not directly comparable with visa categories but will include both family-related migration and potentially dependants of other migrants, as explained in the Family topic.

Asylum

Asylum applications from main applicants increased by 38% to 34,687 in the year ending March 2016, the highest number of applications since the year ending September 2004 (36,305). The largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of **Iran** (4,305), followed by **Eritrea** (3,321), **Iraq** (2,805), **Sudan** (2,769), **Pakistan** (2,669) and **Syria** (2,539). Including dependants, the number of asylum applications increased by 30% to 41,563 in the year ending March 2016. There was around 1 dependant for every 5 main applicants.

There were 1,981 **grants of asylum** or an alternative form of protection to Syrian main applicants at initial decision in the year ending March 2016, with a grant rate of 87%. In addition, 1,667 people (including dependants) were granted humanitarian protection under the **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)**. On 7 September 2015, the Prime Minister announced an expansion to the existing Syrian VPRS. Through this expansion, it is proposed that 20,000 Syrians in need of protection will be resettled in the UK by 2020. A total of 1,854 people have been resettled since the Syrian VPR scheme began, including 1,602 arriving since October 2015.

Estimated figures show the UK had the ninth highest number (42,000) of asylum applications **within the EU** in the year ending March 2016, including dependants. Germany (562,000), Sweden (159,000) and Hungary (142,000) were the three EU countries that received the highest number of asylum applications, together accounting for 62% of asylum applications in the EU in that period.

Admissions

The **total number of journeys** increased by 5% to a record 124.4 million in the year ending March 2016 (+5.7 million). This increase was accounted for by 5.4 million more journeys by British, other EEA and Swiss nationals (up 5% to 109.2 million) and 0.3 million more journeys by non-EEA nationals (up 2% to 15.2 million), compared with the previous 12 months.

Returns

Enforced removals from the UK decreased by 8% to 11,637 in year ending March 2016 compared with the previous 12 month period (12,661).

The number of **passengers refused entry at port and who subsequently departed** has increased by 9% in year ending March 2016, to 17,752 from 16,302 in year ending March 2015. The number **refused entry at port and subsequently departing** has been increasing slowly since 2012.

In the year ending March 2016, provisional data show there were 5,692 returns of foreign national offenders (FNOs), using enforcement powers or via deportation. This was an 8% increase on the previous year (5,277).

Visitor visas

There were 531,375 **visas granted** (excluding visitors and transit) in the year ending March 2016, a fall of 11,931 (-2%). This fall was driven by lower numbers in sponsored (Tier 4) Study (-10,210), Work (-7,167) and Short-term study (-3,972) categories. There were increases in the Other category (+7,382, of which EEA Family permits +4,489) and Family category (+3,682). Most of the fall in work visas related to Youth mobility and temporary work (-2,748) and Tier 1 investor visas (-2,106), reflecting changes introduced in November 2014. Skilled work visas fell 1% (-1,228).

The nationalities granted the most visas (excluding visitors and transit) were **Chinese** (92,715; excluding Hong Kong), **Indian** (84,663) and **US** (34,278).

There were 35,072 (+2%) more **visitor visas granted** at around 1.9 million. There were notable **increases in visitor visa** grants for Chinese nationals, up 22% (+72,611 to 406,669, excluding Hong Kong), and Indian nationals, up 13% (+43,487 to 373,299). By contrast there were large falls in visitor visa grants for Russian nationals (-49,014 to 104,360), down 32%.

Notes to editors

1. *Immigration Statistics, January to March 2016* is available via the UK National Statistics publication hub website and the Home Office statistics web pages <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>.
2. This release is published as part of a coordinated release of migration and population products. These related products are also published today:

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

- *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (Jointly with Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions)*

- *Provisional Long-term International Migration*

The *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report* summarises the regular quarterly migration and related data published by the ONS, Home Office and DWP and is available at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Migration>

Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)

- *National Insurance Number (NINo) Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals to March 2016*

3. The UK Statistics Authority has assessed Immigration Statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and confirmed designation as National Statistics. More information can be found at report 177 on the UK Statistics Authority website <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-immigration/>.
4. For **all press enquiries regarding the Home Office Immigration Statistics release**, please contact the Home Office Press Office who will liaise with the Home Office Statistics team.

Newsdesk: **020 7035 3535**

Please note that the press office deals with enquiries from the media only. Members of the public should phone Public Enquiries 020 7035 4848, or email to MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Press enquiries regarding ONS publications should be directed to the ONS Press Office.

5. The Home Office Responsible Statistician is Chris Kershaw.